

Our Philosophy: A Touch of Magic

By Carol Schaefer

With a touch of magic, portals of wonder open wide, igniting the imagination and inspiring dreams. At that moment of enchantment, nothing is impossible.

This is the message of hope that internationally acclaimed escape artist and magician Laurice brings to critically ill children, disenfranchised and at risk youth, and the frail elderly, through the dynamic programs offered by Portals Of Wonder, the non-profit organization he founded.

Following his great grandfather's legacy, Laurice became a Master of Impossibilities. In a history making escape, broadcast live by all the major networks and seen by satellite live in 100 countries, Laurice liberated himself in less than five minutes from inside a one-ton maximum security safe, which had been lowered to the bottom of the Hudson River. Hanging by a burning rope, he's extricated himself from a straight jacket while suspended over a spiked pit filled with vipers and scorpions.

For Laurice, his seven world records for life-threatening escapes have become a metaphor for breaking the ties that bind those who are facing their own life-threatening circumstances, whether illness, poverty or lack of opportunity. To further his goal of liberating people caught up in unimaginable circumstances through the lessons of magic and wonder, Laurice earned a Masters Degree in Social Work.

Today, Laurice and his artist colleagues at Portals Of Wonder bring their message of possibility to transform the lives of New Yorkers of all ages bound by illness, homelessness and poverty.

Magic and imagination help us all to access our inner knowledge and wisdom. Once that peaceful home within is discovered, anything is possible. That portal can never again be closed, insuring lasting meaning in a child's life, serenity for the dying and the energy and "can-do" spirit needed to solve life's problems. Portals Of Wonder programs teach that dreams can indeed come true.

Thrilling and daring escapes are incorporated into the uplifting musical vaudeville review, *Adventures of a Wizard*, developed to illustrate the can-do attitude it takes to overcome adversity. Designed to be performed in theaters, it has small workshop breakout programs for schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, old age homes and other such settings. This sparkling show spearheads the five different breakout programs to further the work, including pioneering arts education workshops, therapeutic programs, intergenerational and mentoring programs.

Giving the hope of triumph against all odds and teaching the rewards of perseverance, patience and determination, are the gifts Portals Of Wonder strives to bring to the New York community. Definitely not an impossible dream.